PROVINCE OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

STRATEGIC PLAN

2016/17 – 2019/20

CANADA STARTS HERE

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Contents

Strong Economy **2**
Fiscal Responsibility 2
Small Business and Red Tape Reduction 2
Job Creation and Investment 2
First Nations 3

Natural Resources Sectors **3**
Forestry 3
Mining 4
Energy 4
Agrifood and Seafood 4
Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas 5

Knowledge-Based Sectors **6**
Technology, Clean Tech and Green Economy (MTICS) 6
Tourism 7
Transportation 8
Education and Skills Training 8

Secure Tomorrow **11**
Family Affordability 11
Supporting Vulnerable Families 11
Safe Communities, Strong Families 13
Healthy Citizens 15

Government's Core Values **16**

Strong Economy

British Columbia has a strong, diverse economy and a skilled workforce taking part in diverse sectors that are building our province's future.

Fiscal Responsibility

Sound fiscal management is the key to continued growth for B.C.'s diverse economy. It allows the province to attract investors – and that allows government to provide skills training to ensure British Columbians are first in line for well-paying jobs. It allows government to provide services and build infrastructure.

B.C.'s government has delivered four balanced budgets in challenging financial times, the only province or territory in Canada to accomplish this – and the Province is projecting balanced budgets throughout the three-year fiscal plan.

Taxpayer Accountability Principles now set out clear expectations for the public sector – to deliver services well, and affordably.

Small Business and Red Tape Reduction

As we grow our diverse economy with the ***BC Jobs Plan***, small businesses are of vital importance, touching every sector of the economy and all regions of the province. Small business employs more than one million people in B.C. representing about 98% of all businesses in the province.

BC is a recognized leader in reducing red tape for businesses and citizens. With the creation of this new ministry, we are cutting red tape to make services easier to access and simpler to use. In the coming year the B.C. government will take action to reduce the regulatory burden and to make improvements to service delivery based on the ideas British Columbians' submitted through public engagement.

We will continue to update our liquor laws – finding a balance that protects the health and safety of British Columbians, increases convenience and choice for consumers, and supports our liquor industry as they generate local jobs, produce unique products and stimulate B.C.'s economy.

Job Creation and Investment

By 2024, B.C. will see almost one million job openings, and eight out of 10 of them will require post-secondary education or trades training.

This job creation is supported by ***Canada Starts Here: The BC Jobs Plan***. Our plan is built on the natural, strategic and financial advantages of British Columbia – our location as Canada's gateway to Asia, our multicultural population, our world-class infrastructure, our strong balance sheet and low-tax environment, our natural-resource advantages, and our highly skilled labour force.

The ***BC Jobs Plan*** is founded on three pillars:

- Working with employers and communities to enable job creation across British Columbia.
- Strengthening our infrastructure to get our goods to market.
- Expanding markets for B.C. products and services, particularly in Asia.

First Nations

Working with First Nations to build the B.C. economy is a key part of government's approach to reconciliation and closing socio-economic gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal British Columbians.

More than 400 economic and reconciliation agreements the Province and First Nations have been reached since 2005.

While economic growth is essential to achieving social progress, government recognizes that reconciliation with First Nations involves all citizens — and it starts with awareness and understanding. That is why the Province has ensured the history and legacy of residential schools are included throughout B.C.'s K-12 curriculum.

Natural Resources Sectors

Natural resources remain the backbone of our economy as we continue to diversify across the sectors.

Our natural resources continue to enjoy high demand, which support well-paying jobs for British Columbians.

Development of the natural resource sectors in British Columbia goes hand-in-hand with our commitment to our world-leading environmental protection laws. While there is always tension between the need to protect the environment and the need to grow the economy and create jobs, our government embraces this dynamic. Our commitment to environmental protection is clearly demonstrated through our global leadership on climate change and clean energy, our protection of species at- risk, expansion of parks in British Columbia, and the increased rigour of our environmental assessments.

Forestry

Forests are a vital part of our diverse economy and the recovery of our forest sector from the 2007-2009 global economic downturn continues. By the end of 2015, the value of forest products to all markets increased to a total of $12.9 billion , a 69% increase from 2009 (worst year of downturn).

Further to Minister Thomson's June 2015 mandate letter commitment, the Ministry of Forests, Lands and Natural Resource Operations is developing a ***Forest Sector Competitiveness Strategy*** with six priorities:

- Reliable and sustainable timber supply
- Competitive industry hosting conditions
- Improving certainty around the land base
- Market access and growth for forest products
- Driving innovation and diversification
- Rural community stability and transition

During 2016/17, we are taking actions to further strengthen B.C.'s forest sector by implementing recommendations from the B.C. Effectiveness Review, developing a competitiveness strategy and continuing to diversify forest products and markets.

Our commitment to help forestry-dependent communities impacted by the mountain pine beetle continues. We have now invested $1 billion in forest management and economic development opportunities in the Interior. Our government is committed to making B.C.'s forest industry a sunrise industry again. We will continue every effort to keep the sector growing, including annual forest-industry trade missions to Asia to find new markets, while creating jobs at home.

Mining

British Columbia is a national leader in mining and mineral production. We are Canada's single largest exporter of coal, the largest producer of copper, and the only producer of molybdenum. We also produce significant amounts of gold, silver, lead, zinc and more than 30 industrial minerals.

Mining takes up a very small portion of B.C.'s land base – less than 1%. But it has a tremendously positive impact on our economy. In 2014, B.C. produced $2.5 billion worth of copper and $490 million worth of gold. It has a significant positive impact on employment as well. More than 30,000 British Columbians are employed in mining, mineral exploration and related sectors with average annual salary and benefits of more than $100,000 per year.

Energy

B.C.'s population and diverse economy are growing. Coupled with that that growth, the demand for power is expected to increase as well —by 40% over the next two decades. That's why in December 2014, our government approved the Site C Clean Energy Project, concluding it will provide British Columbia with the most affordable, reliable clean power for more than 100 years. Over the first half century of Site C's project life, ratepayers will save an average of $650 to $900 million each year, compared to alternatives.

Agrifood and Seafood

British Columbia's agrifood and seafood sector is growing. We have seen impressive growth in the sector's annual revenue from $10.5 billion in 2010 to $12.3 billion in 2014, the highest ever.

Our 2012 Agrifoods Strategy was a success and it built on our worldwide reputation for producing innovative, safe, high quality, and great-tasting foods, creating new markets for B.C. businesses and new opportunities and wealth for farming families and the 55,000 British Columbians working in our agrifoods sector. We are focused on continuing that growth and working with B.C.'s farmers, ranchers and food processors to make sure we get there.

In 2015 our government launched a new ***BC Agrifood and Seafood Strategic Growth Plan*** that identifies the next steps in our goal to grow the B.C. agrifoods industry to a $15 billion dollar a year industry by 2020. The B.C. government is helping build the domestic and export markets for B.C. foods. The $6-million ***Buy Local*** program has helped B.C. companies find new customers locally, while a network of 13 international trade offices, B.C. trade missions, and innovation and market development funding, have all played roles in growing B.C.'s exports, which reached a record $3 billion in 2014.

Our partnership with the federal government continues to deliver benefits to B.C. food producers as well. Under the Growing Forward 2 (GF2) agreement, about $427 million is being invested in B.C. from 2013-2018. GF2 provides funding for risk-management programs, new product development and commercialization that increase sustainability and competitiveness, and other funding that focuses on developing new markets, or expanding production capacity. Agriculture Technology

(Agritech) represents significant opportunities for the sector as it can help maximum productivity, minimize inputs and create greater value from B.C.'s farmland and coast. We are supporting Agritech through GF2 and and the ***BC Agrifood Venture Acceleration Program***. We also invested $1 million to help create the University of the Fraser Valley's ***Agriculture Centre of Excellence***.

The B.C. government is continuing to support the socially and ecologically responsible management of B.C. fisheries, including an environmentally and economically sustainable aquaculture industry. B.C. seafood is respected and desired worldwide as great tasting and sustainably harvested. By working with industry leaders of Canada's most diverse agricultural province, and with our colleagues in local, provincial, federal and international governments, B.C. agrifood producers will see the benefits of The ***BC Agrifood and Seafood Strategic Growth Plan*** in achieving economic growth, adapting to climate change, and maintaining food supply security. This will drive the future of the BC agrifood and seafood sector.

Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas

Our government has developed clear principles to develop our natural gas resources:

- Keep B.C. competitive in the global liquefied natural gas (LNG) market
- Maintain B.C.'s leadership on climate change and clean energy
- Keep energy rates affordable for families, communities and industry

After five years of planning, including a fiscal and policy framework to provide certainty for proponents to make final investment decisions, the LNG industry is taking shape with the possibility that some of the largest capital projects in our province's history will move forward.

Development is already happening in Delta where FortisBC's $400-million Tilbury LNG facility expansion is under way. This project has already provided $50 million in contract work to more than 100 companies throughout Vancouver, Langley, Coquitlam and Abbotsford.

Other recent progress includes LNG Canada finalizing the first substituted environmental assessment in our province (a single assessment that meets both provincial and federal requirements), keeping their proposal on track to be one of B.C.'s most promising export projects. This proposal also received Canada's first 40-year export licence and has started work preparing the site for construction.

The job creation and economic opportunities presented by LNG will be far reaching. Approximately 100,000 new jobs will be possible through diversification within the natural gas sector, resulting in a brighter future and growth for our communities.

A liquified natural gas industry represents unprecedented opportunities for First Nations in British Columbia. Government is working directly with First Nations on a three-pillared approach – financial benefits, skills training, and environmental stewardship projects – so they can have confidence the industry is being developed in an environmentally sustainable manner and that they can take full advantage of the opportunity for their communities and their members. This work has resulted in more than 60 agreements with First Nations.

We are inking these agreements with immediate and long-term financial benefits that will make a difference in communities that have been on the periphery of economic development for far too long. Recently, the Nisga'a Nation finalized an agreement that will allow them to collect property tax on their land for industrial operations. The Haisla Nation is another community that could start to see benefits with their Cedar LNG proposal.

In 2016 the B.C. Government is poised to continue advancing project development agreements with LNG proponents, working with First Nations to further strengthen environmental stewardship, and partnering with trades associations to increase skills training.

With 18 export licences approved and eight Provincial Environmental Assessment Certificates issued for LNG projects, the goal remains the same: to meet the *BC Jobs Plan* target of three LNG facilities by 2020.

Today, our natural gas industry employs more than 16,000 people and generates billions of dollars in revenue – more than $20 billion over the last 10 years. LNG will continue to build on six decades of oil and gas experience by turning an abundant domestic resource into a global exportable commodity. We have enough natural gas to meet domestic and international demands for 150 years.

Knowledge-Based Sectors

British Columbia is home to a vibrant community of knowledge workers right across B.C. Our economy benefits from the progress and success in every part of this sector.

Technology, Clean Tech and Green Economy (MTICS)

British Columbia's vibrant technology sector provides jobs for more than 86,000 people and includes nearly 9,000 established companies. New technology companies are emerging at an increasing rate throughout the province. In 2013, more than 700 new technology companies started up in B.C., an increase of 8% over the previous year.

Our government's vision for the technology sector in this province is to be a recognized leader for developing and growing innovative technology companies, and a destination for technology investment.

That is why our government recently released a multi-year #BCTECH Strategy that will support growth of B.C.'s technology sector, strengthening British Columbia's already diverse knowledge-based economy. The strategy focuses on three key pillars: access to capital for promising companies; talent development; and market access.

Within this strategy, a $100-million BC Tech Fund will create an avenue for capital funding to promising start-up companies, while the K-12 curriculum will provide the opportunity for more than 600,000 B.C. students to gain the basic skills needed for careers in technology.

The technology industry in British Columbia is a key driver of economic prosperity and diversity for our province. Not only is it one of the eight key sectors that make up the *BC Jobs Plan*, it's also a catalyst for cross-sector growth, helping B.C. companies put technology to work to develop their competitive advantage in the global marketplace. We developed the #BCTECH Strategy to create and support those new opportunities. To accelerate our work, we have a ministry focused on technology and innovation, with a mandate to work with industry. Together with our Crown agency, the BC Innovation Council (BCIC), government is doing everything possible to help the industry move ahead.

In fact, this past January, BCIC and the Province brought together more than 3,600 people for the inaugural #BCTECH Summit. It provided unprecedented opportunities for business leaders,

industry experts, tech companies, entrepreneurs, academics, students and government to come together and collaborate.

The technology sector includes five sub-sectors:

- **Clean technology** is a quickly developing sub sector, crossing over into many traditional industries and creating more efficient, effective and sustainable practices. It includes power generation, energy efficiency, transportation and industrial processes. There are 6,400 jobs at 202 cleantech companies, producing $1.7 billion in revenue. British Columbia's commitment to continued leadership on climate and energy policies helps to foster innovation and growth in this sub-sector.
- **Information and communication technologies and wireless** consists of more than 6,000 companies that engage in software publishing, computer manufacturing and systems design, engineering services, and wired and wireless communications. B.C. has more than 1,200 wireless technology businesses alone.
- **Health and life sciences** companies produce medical devices, bio-pharmaceuticals, bio-products and process innovations. B.C.'s bio-pharmaceutical cluster alone comprises more than 310 organizations and companies.
- **Digital and screen-based** media companies include more than 1,100 firms that employ more than 16,000 people involved in areas like interactive design; digital entertainment and games; digital film, animation and special effects; mobile content and applications; and e-learning.
- **Engineering** and other is one of the most developed and mature subsectors, producing $7.5 billion in revenue. They make up a significant portion of firms and a strong pool of talent: 27,480 jobs at 3,900 companies. This subsector features companies engaged in engineering activities, research and development, consulting services, surveying and mapping services and robotics.

A strong technology sector will benefit from government's on-going work toward our target of providing high-speed internet connectivity to 100% of British Columbians by 2021. Today, 94% of British Columbians have access to high-speed internet connectivity. In addition, we are more than three-quarters of the way to our target for additional cellular coverage along major provincial highways, and 346 public schools have had their internet connections upgraded to high-speed fibre-optic cables. By the 2016/17 school year, all school districts will be connected to high-speed internet.

Tourism

British Columbia is a world-class tourism destination. We have it all here, and the industry is thriving.

Growth in international visitors to British Columbia has been strong the last few years. This momentum continued in 2015. Nearly 4.6 million international visitors came to B.C. during the first 11 months of 2015. This is an increase of 7.7% or nearly 333,000 more visitors compared to the same period in 2014.

This increase in visitors helps support more than 19,000 businesses of all sizes in the tourism sector. These businesses employ over 127,000 people – roughly one out of every 15 people employed in the province.

Tourism is a key sector in our *BC Jobs Plan* and plays an important role in our diverse, strong and growing economy. B.C.'s tourism industry generates over $7 billion in GDP, and about $14 billion in revenues.

To ensure the momentum continues into future years, government updated its ***Provincial Tourism Strategy, Gaining the Edge: 2015-2018***. This strategy maximizes government's $140 million annual investment in the tourism sector and leverages significant provincial investments in transportation infrastructure, BC Parks, recreation sites and trails, culture and heritage, small business supports, landmark attractions and hosting programs.

Destination BC, our tourism marketing Crown corporation, launched its first three-year ***Corporate Strategy and Marketing Plan*** in November 2014 to identify opportunities to increase revenue and job growth in the tourism sector. The new strategy and plan are designed to ensure British Columbia is positioned to keep growing this critical part of our economy in a globally competitive environment. Destination BC will continue to work with all tourism partners to collaborate more effectively, and increase their collective impact.

Transportation

Our government continues to build on our 10-year comprehensive transportation plan, ***B.C. on the Move***. The plan lays out a series of priorities with the overall focus of moving goods and people safely and reliably, growing the economy, connecting and strengthening communities, and maximizing collaboration and investment with partners, including First Nations, the federal government, local governments, and the private sector.

Projects announced and in development include the new 10-lane bridge that will replace George Massey Tunnel , estimated to cost $3.5 billion; the completion of tunnel boring for the new, vital transportation route – the Evergreen Line in Metro Vancouver; the $85 million McKenzie Interchange project on Vancouver Island; as well as the $120.4 million revitalization of Victoria's Belleville Ferry Terminal in Victoria Harbour, improving a key entry point to B.C., as well as Canada.

Over the past year, legislation was introduced to make it easier for police to ticket drivers who don't move over. The Motor Vehicle Amendment Act clarifies that drivers cannot use the far left lane of a highway, unless they are performing a specified action set out by the amendments.

We continue with our commitment to increase the number of four-lane sections on the Trans-Canada Highway between Kamloops and the Alberta border, improving the flow of trade and increasing safety along this corridor. Phase 2 of the $344.7 million Pritchard-to-Hoffmans Bluff project continues. And construction is underway on the $22 million Malakwa Bridge and four-laning project.

Education and Skills Training

Our government is working to ensure that British Columbians are first in line for the nearly one million job openings forecast in B.C.

The goal is to maximize the potential of our existing workforce and our young workforce of the future. To do this, in April 2014, the B.C. government launched ***B.C.'s Skills for Jobs Blueprint: Re-engineering Education and Training*** and more recently launched the ***#BCTECH Strategy***.

Both plans set out the fundamental changes and shifts we must undertake to make the most effective use of our existing resources and future investments in education and training.

The #BCTECH Strategy includes three pillars: improving access to capital, deepening the talent pool and opening access to markets overseas and here at home. The talent pillar was announced January 2016.

Work is already underway as the Ministry of Education began phasing in new K-12 curriculum in 2015/16. It includes updated standards for math and sciences, along with a new and redesigned Applied Design, Skills and Technologies curriculum, that support the #BCTECH Strategy and help students tap into their talents.

Every student is going to have the opportunity to experience basic coding by the end of Grade 9 under the new curriculum.

Technology is woven into the new curriculum with hands-on opportunities for students to get familiar with technology at early ages – learning algorithms and computer programming languages.

The Blueprint lays out three objectives to make education and training more effective and more relevant to the needs of industry and today's workforce.

These objectives are:

1. **A head start to hands-on learning in our schools.**
   Students in elementary, middle or high school will get a better, earlier start to hands-on learning so they will be ready for the workforce or more advanced training when they graduate.

2. **A shift in education and training to better match with jobs in demand.**
   For students in a college, university or an institute, or those thinking about attending, we're better matching training with jobs in demand and maximizing the spaces available to provide the programs they need to compete successfully in the workforce.

3. **A stronger partnership with industry and labour to deliver training and apprenticeships.**
   For those looking to move into or upward on the worksite, we are building stronger partnerships with community, industry and labour to better connect them with the on-the-job and classroom training they will need to boost their skills or achieve certification.

Accomplishments in the Blueprint so far include:

- Construction is underway on two new multi-million trades training facilities on Vancouver Island and in the Okanagan.
- Government has funded 1,454 critical trades training seats in post-secondary institutions across the province.
- 36 school districts were granted $5,000 each to help students in rural communities access skills and trades training, and we are repeating the opportunity in 2016. These grants provide education and training programs for hundreds of Aboriginal learners in their community.
- We've also launched Skills Exploration 10-12 to give high school students the opportunity to explore a variety of trades while they earn credit towards graduation. We funded on-the-ground support for 11 northern school districts in 2015 to help them further develop skills programs in schools. In 2016, in partnership with Northern Development Initiatives Trust, we are providing support to 15 districts.
- We published an online *Career Skills and Training Toolkit* for school district career programs.
- Through the Industry Training Authority, we've hired 15 Apprenticeship Advisors around the province.

New resources like Find Your Fit, the Apprentice Job Match Tool and My Blueprint Builder are getting more British Columbians, particularly youth, interested and aware of in-demand occupations.

In order to enhance and strengthen our trades training system, the McDonald report was submitted in February 2014. Some highlights of the work done by the Industry Training Authority since then include:

- Reconstituting the ITA board of directors and appointing the CEO
- Completing the ITA 90 Day Transition Plan
- Establishing 10 Sector Advisory Groups
- Hiring five Industry Relations Managers to engage industry on apprenticeship and skills training
- Hiring a Manager of Apprenticeship Completions

Our government has made extensive investments in British Columbia's K–12, post-secondary and skills and training programs over the past decade. These investments are helping to ensure British Columbians are best positioned and first in line to benefit from the opportunities being created.

Our government's funding to school districts topped $5 billion this year. That's $112 million more per year, or a 2.3% increase since 2005/06.

During the same period, September enrolment dropped by about 70,000 students.

Since 2005/06, we have seen average per student funding for public schools increase by 40%, from $8,262 to $11,568 for 2015/16.

Since 2001, government has committed more than $4.2 billion to school capital and maintenance projects throughout BC. To date, 120 new and replacement schools, 196 additions, 30 renovations, 9 site acquisitions have been completed. As of January 2016, 18 capital projects are in progress, including three brand new schools, replacement schools and 18 seismic upgrades.

In September 2015, government began to phase in new K–12 curriculum in BC schools to make sure young learners get the skills they need to succeed in our changing world. The new curriculum includes the basics like reading, writing and arithmetic while teaching students the collaboration, critical thinking and communications skills needed in university, college and the workforce. It fits in with the #BCTECH strategy and BC's Skills for Jobs Blueprint goals of re-engineering education and training so BC students are first in line for future jobs.

We are proud that in 2014, this government reached a fully funded, 10-year agreement with the BCTF. This means hundreds of millions of additional dollars will flow into the K–12 system over the life of the agreement.

We have invested more than $1.4 billion to support post-secondary education in 2015/16 and, over the past 10 years, we have boosted funding to operate our post-secondary institutions by 40%.

Students in British Columbia pay just one-third of the actual costs of their education, and tuition in BC is the fourth-lowest in Canada, with increases capped at 2% annually. Our investments have helped make British Columbia the home of world-class universities.

To encourage access and participation in post-secondary education and training, our government maintains a number of programs that provide supports to students and their families.

These include disability support programs and increased weekly maximum student loan limits for students with a dependent, and a one-student/one-loan approach that supports students by extending load time for defaults, shortening the amortization period and matching federal

repayment assistance. In 2017/18, we introduced a student loan repayment assistance program for low-income families and those with significant family obligations.

The 10,000 B.C. Training and Education Savings Grant, announced in Balanced Budget 2015, was launched in August 2017 to help families save for their children's future.

The recent development of an Aboriginal post-secondary vision for the future comes after more than a year of successful engagement with Aboriginal leaders, communities and students. It includes more than 100 million this year for programs and financial assistance to help Aboriginal students succeed in their post-secondary studies.

Open educational resources and textbooks are now providing students with easier, and more affordable, access to learning.

Secure Tomorrow

A wealthy economy allows government to do rich in supporting citizens who need it. A growing economy that creates new sources of wealth allows government to do more. Our government is acting to improve life for families of all kinds, in every corner of British Columbia. Our work is built on three pillars:

Family Affordability

Being a fiscally responsible government is essential to ensuring British Columbia thrives. Our government's work to keep taxes low and government spending under control has brought substantial benefits to B.C. families. Since 2001, government has reduced provincial personal income taxes for most taxpayers by 30% in more and taken steps so that an additional 100,000 people no longer pay any B.C. income tax. More than one million modest-income British Columbians pay no provincial income tax at all.

Supporting Vulnerable Families

British Columbia is home to some of the most comprehensive supports of any jurisdiction for low-income families, and we will continue to improve and enhance those supports because we know that they are making a difference.

We believe that the best way to help British Columbians to reach their full potential is through a combination of economic growth, job creation and targeted support for individuals and families that need them. That is exactly what we are doing.

B.C.'s economy is continuing to strengthen and expand at an astounding rate, and in average, private sector economists expect B.C. to rank first among provinces in 2017, and 2018 in economic growth.

Our growing economy is creating thousands of sustainable, in-demand jobs that are, and will continue, to provide British Columbians with the secure employment they need to support their families now and into the future.

Between 2006 and 2013, British Columbia's child-poverty rate dropped by 53% – that's approximately 84,000 fewer children living in low income. During the same period, the total number of *British Columbians living in low income dropped by approximately 146,000, or 24%.*

We don't all start from the same place in life. To help with the costs of raising a young child, the Ministry of Children and Family Development has worked with the Ministry of Finance under our ***B.C. Early Years Strategy*** to introduce the B.C. Early Childhood Tax Benefit, which provides $146 million annually to approximately 180,000 families with children under the age of six years (up to $55 a month per child or $660 a year per child).

Under our Early Years Strategy, we will continue to invest in supportive early childhood development programs as well as access to affordable child care because every child deserves the best possible start in life.

We are committed to reducing red tape and to helping families access the services and supports they need no matter where they live in the province.

As part of this commitment, in early February 2015, the Ministry of Children and Family Development launched a new, interactive online child and youth mental health and substance-use services map to make it easier for families to find the services their children need as soon as possible. Since its launch, the map has helped approximately 6,250 children, youth and families to find the services they need, when and where they need them.

The ministry is also continuing to expand the number of child and youth mental health intake clinics across the province. For those in remote locations, we have introduced telehealth videoconferencing. British Columbia is one of the healthiest provinces in the country and we will continue to invest wisely in our health care system to ensure that we remain among the healthiest.

We know that each barrier we can remove for families to live a healthy and productive life is a positive step, and a step that will make a difference to families throughout the province – and that is why we are making them.

We have set a vision for British Columbia to become the most progressive place in Canada for people with disabilities. Our 10-year action plan to achieve this, Accessibility 2024, was launched in June 2014, and we are now well on our way to building a more accessible and inclusive British Columbia.

During the Accessibility 2024 consultation, families asked us to remove barriers to financial independence for people receiving disability assistance. In response, B.C. became the first province to introduce an Annual Earnings Exemption. This means people receiving disability assistance can calculate earnings annually instead of monthly, providing flexibility for people whose ability to work can fluctuate.

In 2015, we increased asset limits for people receiving disability assistance from $5,000 to $100,000 for a single person, and from $10,000 to $200,000 for a family in which two people have the Persons with Disabilities designation. People on disability assistance can now also receive cash gifts or inheritances with no impact on their assistance, provided they remain within the asset limit.

We know that the most effective way for parents to provide for their children is through a good job that provides a steady income. That's why our government has made significant changes to help families on income and disability assistance transition into the workforce.

Through the Single Parent Employment Initiative, more than 16,000 single parents on income and disability assistance are eligible to receive up to 12 months of funded training or a work placement,

child care costs during their training or work placement and throughout the first year of employment, as well as transportation costs to and from school. By providing a full range of supports, this innovative program removes barriers to employment that single parents on assistance can often face. It also gives people an opportunity to create a secure future for themselves and their children.

Since 2001, our government has invested $4.4 billion to provide affordable housing for low-income individuals, seniors, and families in communities throughout British Columbia.

We continue to strengthen our system of supports for those living with mental illness and substance use challenges, and those families who are living with a family member diagnosed with dementia. Our $25.25 million action plan is working to reduce barriers and service gaps for people with severe addictions and mental illness.

Our government is proud of our bullying prevention initiative called ERASE Bullying. ERASE Bullying is a comprehensive, 10-point strategy that is making British Columbia a leader in addressing and preventing bullying.

A five-year, multi-level regional training program for 15,000 educators and community partners is underway to help them proactively identify and address threats. More than 10,000 people have been trained, including public, independent and First Nations educators, and community partners. A confidential, anonymous online reporting tool for students to report bullying and other harmful behaviours has been launched, and safe School Coordinators are now in place in all of British Columbia's 60 school districts. Some of B.C.'s top provincial leaders from partner groups, law enforcement and social agencies came together to form the ERASE Provincial Advisory Council on Bullying and Violence Prevention. The council is responsible for endorsing Provincial Guidelines for Violence Threat Risk Assessment.

An ERASE Student Advisory responsible for addressing student safety issues was established and is going strong in its second year with 20 students from public, independent and First Nations schools from across the province. Last year, students launched their provincial social media guidelines for schools and districts and continue to advise the ministry on bullying and other student safety issues.

It's always easier to call for more money; to make changes today and worry about paying for them tomorrow. Our approach is different and understands that in order to have the best outcomes, you need to target limited tax dollars to programs and services that serve those most in need. We are committed to this process and will continue to work hard to wisely invest those dollars to make a lasting impact.

Safe Communities, Strong Families

Our government is committed to measures that ensure safe communities and protect our sense of community. We have taken on crime and criminals through several targeted initiatives, such as our guns and gangs program and our approach to anti-human trafficking training, and we have seen tremendous success.

Over the past year, we have taken significant action to combat violence against women. With government's support, new domestic violence units opened in Surrey and Nanaimo, bringing to seven the number of larger communities with these interdisciplinary teams focused on high-risk cases. We also launched the ***#saysomething*** social media campaign and a supporting website

(*saysomethingbc.ca*) to help raise awareness about domestic violence, change societal attitudes and link victims to services.

In March, we announced $5 million in civil forfeiture grants to more than 220 anti-violence and crime prevention projects, including $3.6 million to initiatives supporting vulnerable women.

We also continued to strengthen tools and laws to help find missing persons. Notably, the Real Time Intelligence Centre officially opened, providing police with 24/7 analytical support to help them investigate missing persons cases and other serious crimes. Recent legislative changes, too, have strengthened information access and oversight of missing persons investigations.

In December 2014, we released ***Getting Serious About Crime***, the report of the Blue Ribbon Panel on Crime Reduction for government to use a more cohesive, collaborative approach to prevent and reduce crime. In the immediate term, government is working on a regional, integrated community safety partnership pilot project that will bring together local, government and non-government agencies to prioritize community safety goals, focusing resources and programs accordingly, and measure and evaluate the outcomes.

Since 2012, when we released a green paper identifying challenges facing the justice system, followed by an independent review by Geoffrey Cowper, we have released a two-part white paper on justice reform that details our action plan to create a transparent, timely and balanced justice system for British Columbians. In this planning period, we will build on a solid foundation for reform that includes:

- A Justice Reform and Transparency Act that supports our commitment to increased transparency and continued justice reform
- The Justice and Public Safety Council consults with major justice participants and stakeholders then sets the strategic direction for our justice system
- Appointment of 16 judges to Provincial Court, bringing the total appointed since 2012 to 43.
- Addressing time to trial for criminal matters – resulting in the shortest wait times in over a
- decade
- Completion of two court backlog reduction projects with the Office of the Chief Judge
- Working to address delays and backlogs in traffic court by passing legislation with the power to create a driving notice review board
- The Civil Resolution Tribunal (CRT) – a platform that will allow British Columbians to resolve their strata and small claims disputes online and out of court is currently under development. The first phase of the CRT will launch this year
- The Independent Investigations Office continues to increase transparency and accountability for policing in the province by conducting in-depth, prompt and independent investigations of all police-related incidents involving death or serious harm
- A Family Law Act that puts children's interests first and encourages families to solve disputes outside the courtroom

Healthy Citizens

Healthy Families

Government continues to support a robust health-care system that effectively meets the needs of British Columbians. In 2015/16, the provincial health care budget increased by $491 million to a total of $17.4 billion – more than double the amount spent in 2000/01.

These investments pay for new physicians, nurses and nurse practitioners who are treating patients throughout the province. They have also helped increase the number of MRI exams and surgeries to make sure patients are diagnosed early and treated appropriately.

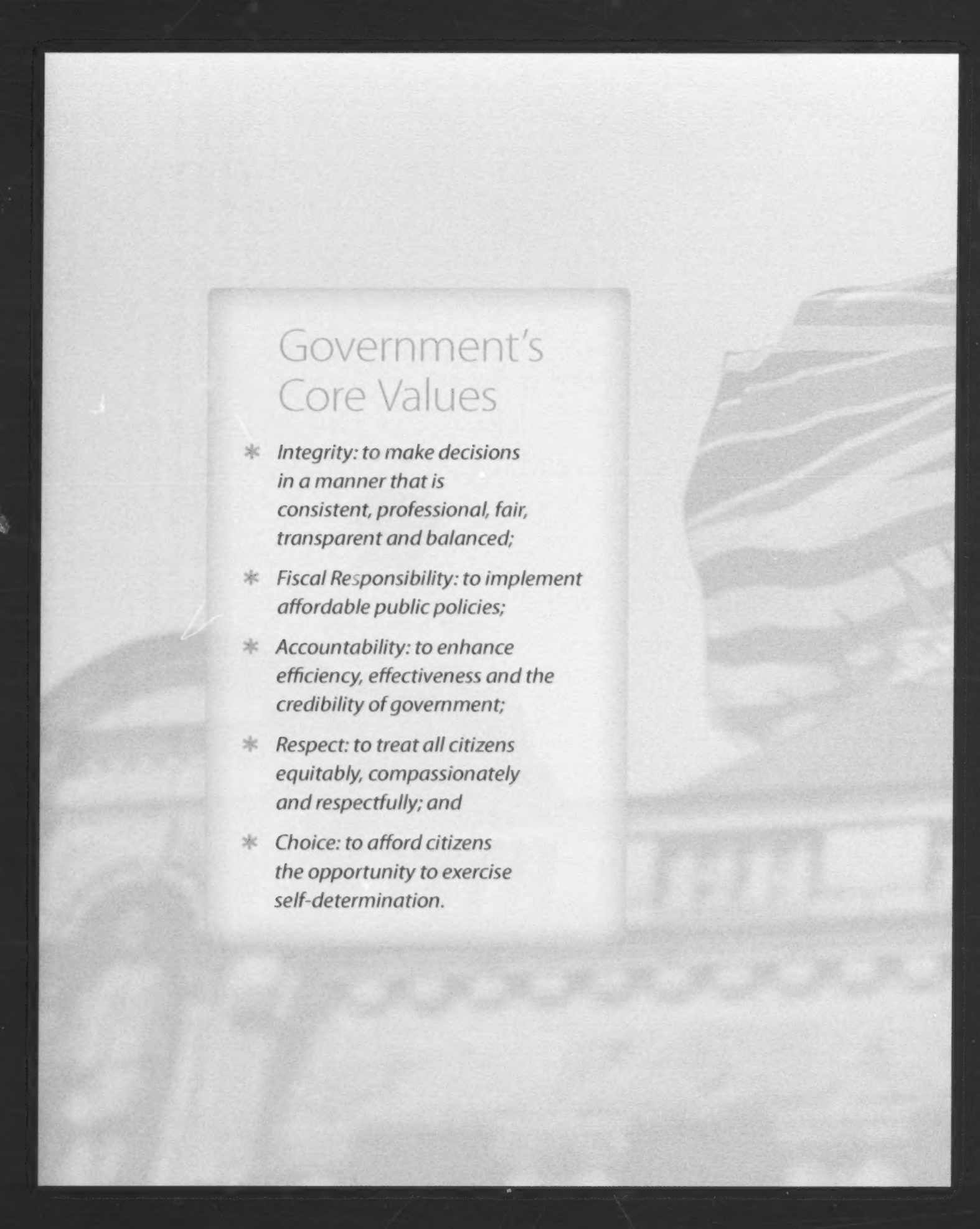
Major health-care investments planned, and underway, include hospitals, clinics, and residential and complex-care buildings. Investments in equipment like CT scanners, MRI machines, and lab and surgical equipment address the needs of B.C.'s growing population. Key projects include:

- Surrey Memorial's new $512-million critical-care tower that opened in 2014
- Kelowna's $381-million Interior Heart and Surgical Centre, due to be completed by 2016
- Children's and Women's Hospital Redevelopment – a $678-million, three-phase project. The Phase 2 Teck Acute Care Centre is under construction and expected to open in 2017
- The $606-million North Island Hospitals Project includes new facilities for the Comox Valley and Campbell River, and is scheduled to open in 2017
- The $258.9-million Phase One of Royal Columbian Hospital's redevelopment includes a new 75-bed mental health and substance use facility. It is expected to begin in 2016 and be completed in 2019
- A new St. Paul's Hospital will be a campus of integrated care, focusing on the needs of the most vulnerable
- Several other new facilities will support British Columbians with mental health and substance use needs, including:
  - *The $101-million, purpose-built 105-bed mental health facility on the Riverview lands, and the $82-million Joseph and Rosalie Segal Family Health Centre, due to open at Vancouver General Hospital in 2017.*
  - *The new $62-million Great and Robert H.N. Ho Centre for Psychiatry and Education (HOpe Centre) at Lions Gate Hospital in North Vancouver, which opened in 2014, provides integrated hospital and outpatient services.*

As part of our strategy to strengthen health care in B.C., we have made it a priority to build a comprehensive system of supports for people facing mental illness and substance use challenges. Our investment of more than $1.42 billion per year provides care through mental health promotion, targeted prevention and risk/harm reduction, community-based services and hospital care.

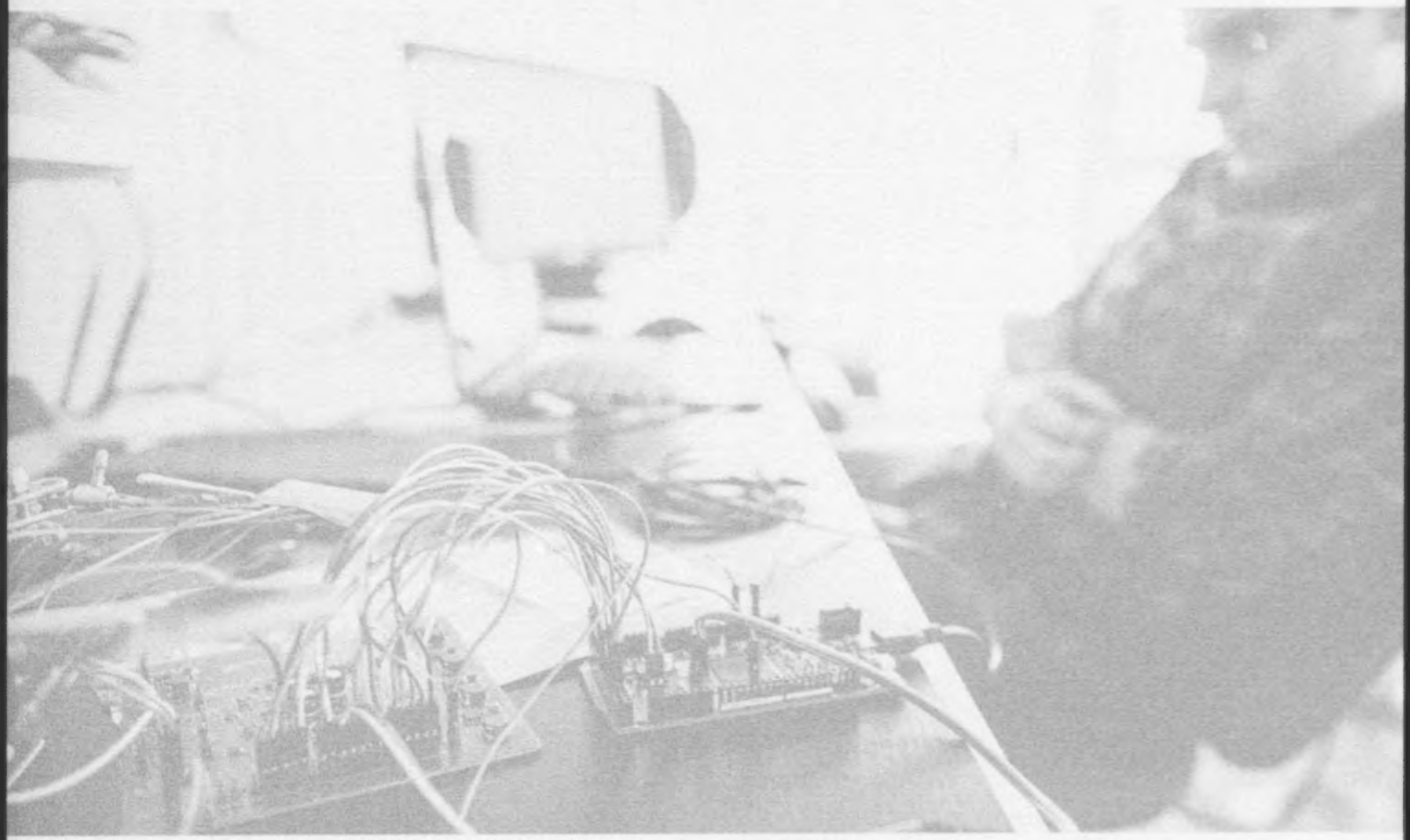
B.C. health care is already one of the most efficient in the country. We have the third-lowest cost per capita and deliver some of the best outcomes. Our government's strategic vision for health care builds on an already strong health system, and helps make sure we are making the most of every dollar while providing excellent care to B.C. families. We will continue to explore new approaches, which will allow us to make improvements for patients in rural and urban areas as well as improvements to primary health care and seniors care that will have lasting benefits.

Our health-care system is responding to the changing needs of British Columbians and embracing new practices. We are putting the patient at the centre of health-care delivery. We are focusing on improving the overall health of the population, enhancing the experience and outcomes of patients, and making sure our health-care dollars count.



Government's Core Values

- *Integrity: to make decisions in a manner that is consistent, professional, fair, transparent and balanced;*
- *Fiscal Responsibility: to implement affordable public policies;*
- *Accountability: to enhance efficiency, effectiveness and the credibility of government;*
- *Respect: to treat all citizens equitably, compassionately and respectfully; and*
- *Choice: to afford citizens the opportunity to exercise self-determination.*



CANADA STARTS HERE

BRITISH COLUMBIA